



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2016

No. 174

## *House of Representatives*

### **Protecting Foreign Service Officers and All Americans Overseas**

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey...I thank my good friend, the distinguished chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. ROYCE, for his leadership on this important bill. I thank ELIOT ENGEL, the ranking member, and, of course, Senators CORKER and CARDIN. This is a true bipartisan piece of legislation. I thank my colleagues for their leadership on this.

Mr. Speaker, a highly skilled group of Foreign Service Officers—about 15,000 strong—are deployed worldwide to promote peace and human rights, to support prosperity, and to protect Americans while advancing the vital interests of the United States abroad. For most, posting overseas requires serious personal sacrifice. For some, deployment entails serious danger—from disease, crime, and terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, after the American Embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi were attacked by terrorists in August of 1998, I chaired hearings on Embassy security in my subcommittee and authored the Admiral James W. Nance and Meg Donovan Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 2000 and 2001 to significantly boost Embassy security, including reconfigured Embassies, setbacks—a zone that puts the street farther away from the building—and additional diplomatic security personnel. The bill, dubbed the “Embassy Security Act,” which passed the House in 1999, never even got a vote in the

Senate; but after much lobbying, my bill was included in its entirety in the FY 2000 appropriations omnibus. In 2005, Congress enacted into law another bill I sponsored, the Department of State Authorities Act, which, among other things, boosted danger pay.

Today, the Royce-Corker-Engel-Cardin bill authorizes \$4.8 billion for Embassy security. It continues the all-important work of ensuring the most effective security possible for our Foreign Service and Americans abroad by directing joint DOD-State contingency plans—including the rapid deployment of Armed Forces—the designation of high-risk, high-threat posts with adequate funding and training commensurate with the danger, and the utilization of “best value” contracting.

The bill provides numerous enhancements of personnel issues for our men and women in the Foreign Service—from promotion opportunities to updated cost-of-living adjustments to improved care of Foreign Service officers’ children-dependents with autism spectrum disorders.

During markup—and I thank the chair for being so gracious for supporting it—I sponsored an amendment that was approved that recognizes applied behavior analysis, or ABA, as proven evidence-based intervention for

autistic children and that the Secretary of State should ensure that coverage of and access to ABA for dependents with ASD of overseas employees is provided.

I travel all over the world, and I often hear from Foreign Service Officers who cannot get ABA treatment for their children. They are anguished because, if they try to go to a deployment where that is provided, it may hinder their Foreign Service careers; and, of course, they put their children first. That shouldn't be the case. There should be no choice. The children need to be supported as well as the Foreign Service Officers.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee also adopted another amendment I offered during markup, which is whistleblower protections for U.N. personnel—we have had hearings on that in our subcommittee—the capacity to investigate

allegations of sexual exploitation committed by peacekeepers and to hold those who commit such heinous crimes accountable.

Mr. Speaker, I have traveled to places like Goma, in the DRC, where peacekeepers were raping 13-year-olds—U.N. peacekeepers. The series of hearings that we held on it found that the zero tolerance policy of the U.N. was really zero compliance. That has to improve. There have been some improvements made but far fewer than what are required. This legislation helps to push that ball significantly down that lane. Hopefully, the peacekeepers will do just that—protect. It is a duty for us to make sure that that happens. There are many other good things in this bill.

Again, I thank Chairman ROYCE for his leadership.

